for her love for children, and she is remembered by her former students as the teacher who read the ***Little House on the Prairie*** books, who permitted them to have Herm and Hermina (the word worms) on their desks when it was their birthday, and who told the best Bible stories. It is the latter for which she wants the most to be remembered.

We know, Miss Koole, that it feels strange, still, to have no papers to grade and lessons to plan. We wish you God's blessing in these days of a more relaxed schedule.

Miss Koole, we have learned it well. We say, Mizpah! ■□■

FEATURE

The July, 1988 issue of "Mid-America Messenger" carried an editorial by Rev. Nelson Kloosterman which we thought to be especially thought-provoking. Rev. Kloosterman is professor of Ethics and New Testament Studies at Mid-America Reformed Seminary, in Orange City, Iowa. He wrote, for the "Messenger," a series of articles on Christian education; and this one in particular seemed likely to give pause to parents and teachers alike. We asked therefore for permission to print it in ***Perspectives.*** *Here it is:*

Christian Day Schools, What Controls Them?

Rev. Nelson Kloosterman

Last time we isolated what we think are three essential components of Christian day school education: *perspective, purpose,* and *process.* They answer the *What?, Why?* and *How?*

This time around we're planning to look at the *what* of Christian day schools. But before we get down to business, we need to take our mental vitamins; otherwise we'll tire out down the stretch. We need two vitamins in particular, both of the C-group: Vitamins C_1 and C_2. Vitamin C_1 contains parental Confidence that along with your child God gave you *competence* to nurture that child "in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4; as I write these lines near Father's Day, I'm reminded that the apostle didn't delegate that duty!

Read on). The instructions came along with our children – in the Word, of course! You parents are the divinely ordained nurturers, instructors, pedagogues. Surely not the state! Just as surely not the academic "expert." Both will at some point along nurture's way try to convince you that you can't *really* do a good job. After all, what do you know about the latest educational theories, sociological studies or pedagogical techniques?

Never mind, just take your vitamin. The one spelled c-o-n-f-i-d-e-n-c-e: *you* must nurture your children, and because you must, you can.

Vitamin C_2 provides parental Courage for deciding how and what your God-entrusted children will learn. Confidence without courage is like learning how to swim. . . on the lawn! You've got the motions down, but you don't dare get wet. You're sure you can swim – why, just look at this kick and that stroke. But you never really *test* your ability, out of fear, perhaps, of failure. Many things stimulate parental courage in determining the education of their children, but probably the best stimulant is remembering that the Lord holds you – not Jason's teacher or Amanda's principal – accountable for the formation of your Jason or Amanda. Courage grabs hold of, and puts power in, parent *controlled* Christian education.

By the way, these vitamins of Confidence and Courage are not the take-'em-if-you-need-'em sort. They come by prescription: "You shall teach [these words which I command] diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deut. 6:7).

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Sit in your house. . . walk by the way. . . lie down. . . rise up. Where do we find Christian schools in *that?*

"Look," you say, "I spend quality time with my kids at home, reading Bible stories together, working hard on catechism (oops: church school) lessons, teaching them what they need to know about the Lord."

To which we simply must reply, "Praise the Lord!"

I mean that. If there's any heartache for those who love Christian education, it's that far too many of us are using Christian schools as a *substitute* for parental nurture.

But let me ask you something. Do you also spend time teaching your children how to write Grandma a clear, neat thank-you note for the birthday present she never forgets to send? Do you also relax with the kids to the sounds of Beethoven or Bach? Have you chatted

with any of your children recently about Gorbachev or Khomeini, or about the next shuttle launch and whether it should be manned or unmanned?

Notice: too many of *us* are leaving it up to the school. We – you and I – expect that though we thoughtlessly switch on Rock-95 or Country and Western, our children will learn to love music. . . at school. We barely get past the comics, but expect our kids to learn appreciation for good literature. . . at school. We ain't got much use for grammar (or spelling), but they'd better learn it. . . at school.

True, they must learn love for music, math, literature, grammar, and all the rest, at school. We'll come to that in a moment.

But the point to press first is that spending "quality time" nurturing our children has to involve more than taking them out of school to go with us to the state basketball tournament. Home nurture has to be consistent with school nurture! There has to be a correspondence between home and school. If it's wholesome marches in 6th grade band, why are we settling for Bruce Springsteen at home? If it's "Paradise Lost" in 12th grade lit class, why be satisfied with "Tour of Duty" at home?

And that brings us back to finding Christian *schools* in Deuteronomy 6:7. If home nurture is the source and context for school nurture (careful now: I've just slipped a bunch of assumptions past you there!), and if day school education is really necessary in modern society (an interesting discussion topic), it seems to me beyond argument that *Christian* parents will want – and must have – *Christian* day schools for their God-given children.

Consistent Christian nurture, whose tenor is set in the Christian home, whose tone echoes in the corridors and classrooms of the Christian school – that's what Deuteronomy 6:7 prescribes.

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Now's the time for those vitamins to release their energy. Remember: Confidence and Courage.

For if the Christian home sets the tone for the Christian school, it also picks the tune. Parents (ought to) control their school.

Do you?

We must be careful here, not to be confused by the claims of what's been called "sphere sovereignty." Abraham Kuyper coined that phrase years ago when Dutch education was under the thumb of the state, to call for schools free (hence, "sovereign") from government intrusion. For Kuyper, life's relationships were like pearls on a string: home–school–church–state–labor. Each of these was a "sphere" with its

own "laws" of operation, its own domain, its own authority. Today people like to lump them all together and talk about their "kingdom vision" for Christian politics, Christian economics, Christian education, etc.

At least two cracks in this theory were spotted by Dutch thinkers who lived after Kuyper, people we don't hear much about in North America. One defect is that if you view all these "spheres" like pearls on a string, the *church* loses its biblical uniqueness and preachers no longer dare to be too specific anymore about the economics and politics and science of their parishioners. The other problem – and I suspect you've seen this firsthand – is that the church's *confessions* are ruled irrelevant to "Christian" educational, political, economic and scientific enterprises. Let the church (with her confessions) be church, but let the school be. . . free, to make her own.

Our point here is that if the Christian home sets the tone, it also picks the tune.

And now the educational "sovereigns" may begin nervously fingering their diplomas and clearing their throats. "What do you mean, parents pick the tune? Who's the expert – they or we? Who took courses in Educational Theory and Child Psychology and Elementary or Secondary Ed?"

There you have it – the primary, most fundamental, absolutely crucial issue involved in the "what," the *perspective*, of Christian day school education: whom does God authorize, through His Word and His providence, to teach *your* children?

We need perspective before process, the "what" before the "how." Before asking where the bucks go in Christian education, we'd better know where the buck stops. ■□■

VIEWPOINTS

Where should I go to college? That's not the most vexing question faced by our young people today, but it is an important one. Sometimes the answer to the question is practically dictated by vocational requirements, by geographic considerations, or some other special circumstances. But more often than not it isn't. Usually one has to weigh the options available. Usually, too, those options include institutions both Christian and secular. And that can present problems. A serious-minded child of God will wonder, how ***should*** *I make that choice? Given the differ-*